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WILD DUCKS IN A CITY PARK

By W. W. RICHARDS

WITH FOUR PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

VENICE has her pigeons, which, feeding in swarms in her streets and squares, form a feature of the city that has become famous the world over, but after all, these are domestic birds that have made no great change in their habits. In the city of Oakland, California, there is to be seen a comparable sight of greater marvel, in the wild ducks that flock upon Lake Merritt during the winter months. In what other community are there to be found wild birds of such notable wariness and timidity finding sanctuary within five minutes walk of the City

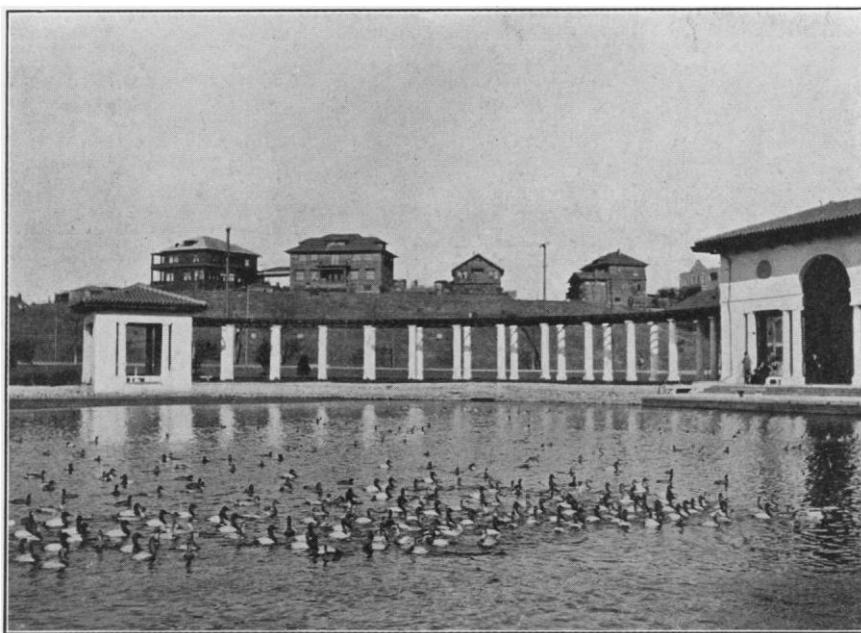


Fig. 32. WILD DUCKS UPON LAKE MERRITT. THE CANVAS-BACKS, PREFERRING DEEP WATER, DO NOT VENTURE OUT UPON THE LAWNS.

Hall and business center, and this in a city of one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants?

The accompanying photographs were taken at Lake Merritt during the past winter (1916-17). At the northern end of the lake a stretch of water about a mile in length has been fenced off, so as to prevent the approach of pleasure boats. Here the ducks congregated by the thousand, resting upon the water or feeding upon the surrounding lawns, a sight that attracted scores of visitors. The birds soon realized their immunity from the dangers by which they were usually beset, and lost all fear of the surrounding throngs.

In the photos taken upon the lawns (figs. 33, 34, 35) the species that predominate are the Sprig (*Dafila acuta*) and Baldpate (*Mareca americana*), with, of course, the ever-present Mudhen (*Fulica americana*) conspicuously in the



Fig. 33. SPRIG, BALDPATE AND COOTS FEEDING ON THE LAWN.



Fig. 34. SAME FLOCK AS IN FIG. 33. SOME OF THE MORE TIMID ARE BEGINNING TO LEAVE AT THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S APPROACH.

foreground. The flock resting upon the water is composed mainly of Canvas-backs (*Marila valisineria*), a deep water species that feeds but little upon land.

These birds arrive about October of each year. After the close of the shooting season they begin to scatter, for, with general protection elsewhere there is no longer need of congregation within this sanctuary; so that the ducks cease to be a conspicuous feature of Lake Merritt some time before their departure for distant breeding grounds.

Oakland, California, February 14, 1917.



Fig. 35. SAME FLOCK AS IN FIGS. 33 AND 34. THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE TRUSTFULNESS OF EVEN VERY TAME WILD DUCKS AND PHLEGMATIC MUDHENS.

SOME FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE NESTING HABIT OF BIRDS

By CLARENCE HAMILTON KENNEDY

WITH TWELVE DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

ONE OF the most interesting series of problems in ornithology is that connected with the high development of the nesting habit in birds. But little has been done to correlate bird anatomy and nesting habits, or even to figure out the causes leading to the great diversity of nests which birds build, for when the present writer wished to look up some obscure points on the nesting habits in this group, great was his surprise that in a group so thoroughly worked, so little had been done in the study of nidification other than the mere collection of data on the nesting habits of individual species. No group in the animal kingdom has been so thoroughly worked as that of the birds, yet the attempts to fig-